











Vol. XIX, No. 1.

January, 1910.

# The Calcutta University Magazine.

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PUBLISHED BY  
R. GANGULY,  
*1-A, College Square.*

PRINTED BY S. H. RAUMAN OF S. MILLER & CO.,  
196, BOW BAZAR STREET, CALCUTTA.  
1910.

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**B. N. SEN,**  
*Hony. Secretary.*

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P. C. GUPTA, 24, Jhamapukur, Calcutta.

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# Calcutta University Magazine.

Vol. XIX, No. 1.

JANUARY, 1910.

## THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

How is genius in literature connected with the age in which it is born? The question cannot perhaps be answered in a single sentence. We hear much about the representative character of genius, of an age reflecting itself most fully in its pre-eminent genius. We also know that a new period, a particular epoch, is often brought about and inaugurated by some powerful genius; nor are examples of a passing epoch reflecting itself, gathering up all its life and strength, in some master-mind, wanting in the history of literature. In fact, modern critics find that Homer's *Iliad* represents a civilisation which was prior to the time when the *Iliad* was composed. Similarly, Shakespeare represents at once the culmination and the prelude to the decadence of the English drama. The *Paradise Lost* too, composed at the most debased and un-puritan period of England's history, is the swan-song of the Puritan England which was then at its last gasp. Lastly, there are sporadic instances of genius which seem to be connected with their age with but few and slender threads. These are marked with a strong individuality and stamped with a certain uniqueness which is at once imitable and non-transferable. They neither belong to any school, nor are founders of any.



It is a vain attempt to try to formulate a general rule about the way in which genius is connected with its age. We should be guilty of a sad mistake if we looked upon genius simply as the vehicle of the mind and spirit of an age, as a mirror reflecting a certain period in history. Certainly the greatest strength of a genius lies where he is himself, where he feels his freedom, where his mighty individuality and

his original personality transcends his environments, and makes him a master, not a slave, of the age he lives in. No trait, no part, of his age can "reflect" itself in him unless it passes through his own mind and soul, and before it allows itself to be moulded and played upon by his personality to the necessary extent. We should not forget that genius has a soul of its own apart from the "time-spirit," and if we meet with any poet or dramatist who seems to be giving a voice to the spirit of his age, we should be content to explain the fact by the excessively sensitive and absorbent character of his genius and by his spirit of sympathetic apprehension ; not by any nebulous theory about a period 'reflecting' itself in its 'representative' genius. It is perfectly true that a poet, surrendering himself to the current channel of feelings in a particular period, may write poems in which others may find a reproduction of their own thoughts and feelings. But this is not the sole function of the poet ; he may write poems which reflect his age as much as every other writer may claim to do. The poet becomes a genius not because he reflects his age, but because, when he wants to voice the contemporary spirit, he can apprehend it and express it in a more perfect and faithful manner than any other writer can.

\* \* \*

Yet poets often seem to do nothing but string contemporary thoughts and feelings into a poetic form ; in such poetry we read "what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed." In this case we may certainly speak of such poetry as 'representative' poetry. But if we are to call such poets men of genius, their genius consists simply in a sense of perfection of form, in an ability to express in words what are for others too subtle to find an adequate expression, in a power of seizing the beautiful in the commonplace, in feeling the common feelings and thinking the common thoughts in a new and intense manner. Much of Tennyson's poetry, for example, partakes of this character. Poets of this class are no great thinkers ; they find in the common atmosphere food and delight enough, and their responsive hearts find their greatest joy in beating in unison with the simple heart-throbs of their country or of common humanity.

Emerson remarks, "The greatest genius is the most indebted man." Certainly : no man takes so much from outside as the man of genius ;

for the simple reason that he can *take*, he can absorb more than ordinary people. We have not the capacity for incurring such heavy debts. Even in the simple matter of the use of words, it has been shown that Shakespeare uses by far the greatest number of words among all English writers. But does this "indebtedness" constitute the essence of genius? I think not. One half of the secret of every genius lies in the absorption, the assimilation, the making the "debt" a part of his very constitution. In this, genius is at one with life itself. Life too advances by exploitation and assimilation. But neither life nor genius ever acknowledges the debt: both calmly appropriate whatever they can take from the outside. The humourist will find a parallel of this process in the saying of Wordsworth when DeQuincey said something new: "Why, that's mine!"

\* \* \*

The other half of genius lies in the expression of this assimilated matter in a new and unprecedented manner. The foreign material is now changed beyond recognition: it is no longer itself. Out of different sources, out of the most widely divergent properties of things, a new creation has been effected. Things have been interpenetrated and interwoven with new elements from within, and bathed and suffused with a new light from no one knows where. This transformation, this new creation, this birth of a new life from the touch of genius is as mysterious and unfathomable as the birth of every form of life in Nature. Here again we find the parallel between the world inside a genius and the world around him.

## SOME ASPECTS OF WORDSWORTH'S POETRY.

Nearly a century has passed away since Lord Jeffrey pronounced his contemptuous verdict, which has become almost historical, that Wordsworth's poetry was nothing more than the drivelling production of an inspired idiot and "would never do." There are few to-day who doubt the high place of Wordsworth in the choir of English singers, yet it must be admitted that his poetry in many circles has failed to secure that amount of appreciation which is really its due. The growth of Wordsworth's popularity has been slow, though steadily rising: but the works of few other poets have passed through a more divergent variety of detraction and adulation. Critics, like Macaulay, Swinburne, and Andrew Lang, on the one hand, see nothing in Wordsworth save dull grandiloquence and

treat him with an indifferent, if not impertinent, air ; while, on the other hand, Coleridge, Matthew Arnold and John Morley would agree to place him "nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton, yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own." It is really hard to make a final decision in the midst of such confusion of tongues, and it is not our purpose here to pause and consider why these eminent critics differ so widely in their recognition of Wordsworth's genius. Our more simple and modest task would be to find out, from a personal study of the Poet, what the general significance of his poetry is and wherein consists its most enduring charm and value.

The most remarkable thing which strikes even a careless reader of Wordsworth's poetry is its deep moral fervour and serious solemnity of tone, which has thrown a halo of priestly glory about his name. By this, it is not meant, however, that Wordsworth wrote mostly on moral themes or that he delighted to indulge freely in the insipid platitudes of a moralising preacher. There are very few thoroughly ethical poems of Wordsworth yet we can say that the whole tone of his poetry is ethical. All the artistic impulses are subjected to a tendency towards moral gravity, yet his poetry never sinks into abject eighteenth century didacticism. And even if some of his poems are sermons, they are sermons which seldom fail to appeal, for the poet is everywhere deep-hearted and sincere. But it is precisely in this, according to a school of modern critics, that the so-called dulness of Wordsworth consists. They lay down a dictum that moral considerations are not only of little avail but that they are sometimes inconsistently irrelevant in true art. But these critics, in their aesthetic craze, forget that it is only imperfect art which limits itself to the depiction of the servid sensuous aspects of life and leaves out of account the thousand and one other aspects, which are often far purer and wholesomer though usually more neglected.

Even Wordsworth's attitude towards Nature is dominated by this spiritual ardour. Nature to him is a spiritual Presence, capable of awakening not merely the feeling of delight as it does in the case of Shelley or Keats but also the ardour of worship ; and the Poet of Nature is not only an interpreter of her charms but also a High Priest before her altar. It would be a sacrilege to approach this living Presence in a questioning spirit, we should bring with us

A heart  
That watches and receives

its gentle elevating influence. For, all knowledge is based on love : the scientific way of looking at Nature or a mere poetic cataloguing of her charms is not the real way of arriving at the truth about her : her loveliness is also a revelation "to be felt in the heart and felt along the blood." Between Nature and the

human soul there is a mystic correspondence and intercourse, through which they influence each other.

Though all these may sound transcendental yet Wordsworth was too great a realist to be a dreamer. He never sought to identify Nature with Man or God. The Greek tendency towards anthropomorphism, which is so marked in Shelley, is almost absent in Wordsworth, who never invests the spirit of material objects with the feelings and moods of the observer. Nature has a life of her own, and her influences are distinct in their character from those of humanity, until they pass into the very essence of human life. Wordsworth is never so much carried away by his emotions as to confound those impulses of a deeper birth that come to him from without with those that come from within.

Thus, though a solitary poet, the musings of Wordsworth are yet not reveries or day-dreams. He never loses himself in his personal emotional life, and this it is what distinguishes him from such ecstatic dreamers as Coleridge and Shelley among his contemporaries. His attitude of mind is essentially reflective. Poets, as a rule, are attuned to song by the sudden passionate impulse awakened by the exciting impressions of a situation or a train of feeling, which, coming from without, absorbs in him everything else but itself. But in Wordsworth this impulse is chastened and subdued by reflection before it bursts forth into song. He never surrenders himself to the obvious and natural currents of thoughts or feeling but puts a voluntary check over them and lifts them to the level of a higher meditative mood in order to contemplate over things in their proper spiritual relations, and thus bring forth maturer results. This deliberate withdrawal of self from thought to thought—this restraint and self government—is a prominent characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry. "All good poetry," he says, "is the spontaneous outflow of powerful feelings. But poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, *had also thought long and deeply.*" This method will be clearly obvious, if we analyse any such characteristic poem of Wordsworth's, as Lucy-Gray. Other poets with such a theme would naturally attempt to touch our hearts with pain and pity by a desolate picture of the poor child's tragic fate, but Wordsworth, in his meditative mood, merges these natural emotions in the contemplation of the loveliness of such a death closing such a pure and lonely life. In his *Sky lark*, Shelley gives us an expression of the intoxication of joy or sadness which he feels in listening to the song of the bird, but in his Cuckoo-poem, Wordsworth ponders thoughtfully over the delight afforded by the voice of the bird, which he spiritualises into an unbodied mystery, 'a wandering voice that tells unto

him a tale of visionary hours,' and the whole world is transfigured by his imagination into a fairy place, where only such mysterious beings flit about.

This tendency of his mind of "thinking long and deeply" naturally breeds a sort of "spiritual frugality" in him, as regards the in-born poetic appetite for ardent feelings and ecstatic passions. Nothing was more repugnant to Wordsworth's temperament than immediate plunging into passionate enjoyment. He is the most economic of poets in hoarding his delights for calm future enjoyment and not exhausting them in momentary impulsiveness. He often finds in present pleasure "life and food for many a future years," when he would redouble his enjoyment by dwelling on it through a vision of "the inward eye which is the bliss of solitude." But he would prefer the hope of enjoyment to the reality and often checks himself with "wise restraint" at the threshold of some imminent enjoyment,

Breathing with such suppression of heart  
As joy delights in—

In his *Tintern Abbey* he describes how his passionate feeling for the beauty of nature passed ; through years, from direct sensuous exhilaration to a subdued spiritual emotion.

Such deliberative temperament, it is obvious, would be singularly averse to the employment of all coarse or violent stimulants to rouse men's mind. Wordsworth not only regards such nervous craving for artificial enjoyment to be pernicious as obstructing the free play of emotions, but he also shows by his poetry, that the human heart may be moved even without such stimulus. He found in simple themes ample materials for a poet's work. If we only take a glance at the heroines of Wordsworth in his Lucy poems, or the *Solitary Reaper* or in his "she was a phantom of delight," and compare them with Byron's Medora, Gulnare, Haidee or Kaled, or even Shelley's ethereal beings, drawn in fading outlines, we at once perceive the respective differences in temperament of these several poets. Wordsworth's heroes and heroines have a charming homeliness and simplicity of character which we miss in the other poets' creations.

But it must not be supposed that his love for the homely and the simple aversion for all strong passions proceeded from a peace-loving lethargic disposition or a tame lack of force and independence of mind. When we remember that Wordsworth wrote in an age when sensationalism was at its height and when jaded misanthropes like the Childe Harold bitterly cried out

We wither from our youth, we gasp away—  
Sick, sick—

we can easily realise what robustness and self-sufficiency of character was necessary to make him stand alone in losty isolation and preach, in the midst of all banters and jeerings, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesseth." To an age which had lost faith in human life in its hunger after impossible ideals and dared to call it "false nature—not in the harmony of things," Wordsworth's conservative optimism came as a blessing to quench all thirst and discontent. He preached to his age—for men do require preachings at times—the grandeur and dignity of our common everyday life and the value of our simple joys and sorrows, setting, as he did, the plain attainable ideal of a perfect homely life against the delusive destructive visions of beauty or happiness that never exists. And, his poetry, in its idealisation of the childlike and recalling of the child from its banishment to the nursery, was a distinct protest against the glorification of the enlightened social man which was a relic of the eighteenth century creed.

All these remarks on the spiritual significance of Wordsworth's poetry and its meditative tendencies must not lead one to suppose that it lacks freshness, plasticity, or music. There are indeed many poems of Wordsworth which are mere worn-out relics of the didactic past but in his highest lyrical moments, his poems instinctively catch the spirit of the romantic present. The perpetually recurring struggle between the classical and the romantic spirit in literature seems to have found an approximation in Wordsworth's poetry, which combines classic gravity with springtide freshness and musical utterance. With poets like Keats or Shelley, we seem to enter a hot-house of glowing, fascinating, sensuous or an impassioned atmosphere of ideal love or beauty, but Wordsworth's natural melody and constant freshness leads us into the open air and makes us feel the truth of his statement that "ninetenths of his poems have been murmured out in the open air." When a visitor at the Rydal Mount expressed a wish to see Wordsworth's library where he works, he was told that though Wordsworth "keeps his books at home, his study is out of doors." It is this spontaneity and instinctiveness of Wordsworth's poetry which inspired the high eulogy of Matthew Arnold that "nature not only gave Wordsworth matter for his poem, but wrote the poems for him."

*(To be continued)*

SUSHIL KUMAR DE,

Fifth Year Class,

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## THE GENIUS OF BANKIM.

As a novelist, India possesses not an equal nor a rival of Bankim. The admired of all admirers, his genius stands alone, unchallenged. Beset with adverse critics, slandered by unworthy tongues, he yet has risen to a position, whence he commands the whole of the modern prose literature of his country and whence he demands, with justice, a rank amongst those revered names, the pride of each nation, the glory of the entire world. A student of the western system of thought, an exponent of oriental philosophy, as far as it is Indian, he has nevertheless succeeded in creating a new school of fiction—a school as original as it is attractive. His conceptions are the outcome of his own native genius ; neither fashioned in the manner of European models nor constructed according to the hitherto stereotyped character of Indian Literature. Instructive without being didactic, original without being fanciful, emotional without being boisterous, aesthetical without artificiality, living in an age, which Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt aptly calls the Augustan Age of India, he outshone all his compeers in literature and is now regarded in the light of a moving genius of the age, in the same light as Michael Angelo is looked upon with respect to the Renascence. We ignore not the fact that Dinabondhu, Hem Chandra and others were his contemporaries ; we are perfectly aware that each is unsurpassed in his own particular line ; we do not hide from ourselves the fact that each has done immense good to India and her literature. But their influence was indirect. It was first brought to a dazzling focus on the cultured few and then having lost much of its power in the transmission, was reflected back to the people. Whereas, Bankim spoke directly and was comprehended by all. Like the sun he emitted his rays directly.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was born in 1838, in a village in the district of 24 Parganas. He had an university education and graduated in the year 1858 ; thus becoming the first Bachelor of Arts of the Calcutta University. Well might that venerable body feel proud of its distinguished beginning ! From his youth Bankim's ideas were all centred round literature. We believe that the final impetus to his adoption of a literary rôle was his apprenticeship in the " Prabhakar" journal of that great reformer Vidyasagar. To crown all, his working associate there was the poet-dramatist Dinobondhu Mitra. Bankim served as a deputy magistrate ; but his life was one devoted to literature—a life spent in deeds which effected not a little good for the land of his birth and the faith of his fathers.

The year 1864 had dawned and with it had dawned a new era for Bengal. Bankim Chandra had assumed his literary toga. He had given " Durgesa Nandini" to the world. Sleepy Bengal was not sleepy then. She was conscious

of the fragrance of her newly budding flower. All felt the influence of "Durgesa Nandini"; all admired its originality; all devoured its contents; all turned their eyes towards its author. The literary circle felt that they had amongst them a new spirit—a spirit, if first signs were true, as great in creative genius as Tulsi Das. The story of the novel is too well known to require recounting. In this, his first appearance before the public, in the first vigour of his manhood, in the fire of literary ambition, he vividly exhibited all his varied powers, if not in full, at least, to a certain extent; now striking our hearts with deep and intense pathos, now scampering off into a light and humourous vein, now swerving off into a gorgeous and Macaulay-like historical description, now, calm and humble, peering into the relentless book of life.

While on the subject, however, we may mention that his humour was more laboured than spontaneous; it was more the outcome of culture and gaiety than of natural and inborn wit. We feel his attempts at humour to be diversions and as such we deem them worthy of our regard. The story is well-known that when standing one day, with his beautiful wife on the platform of a railway-station he saw a man intently and almost pathetically gazing at his spouse. "Sir," enquired the novelist politely, "may I ask to what profession you belong?" The reply was that he was a clerk. "I have tried all my life," said Bankim, inflicting a crushing blow on the observer, "I, a deputy magistrate and a writer of some repute, to gain that heart, but have most miserably failed. For you, sir, I believe there exists not the ghost of a chance."

But, it is in his "Kapala Kundala" that he reached his climax as a novelist. We, verily, believe that as far as originality of conception, force of style, elegance of expression, delicacy of touch, are concerned, this book is unsurpassed; not only this, but that it occupies a prominent place among the classics of the world. Herein is first evinced his spiritual mysticism, "the force that moves the whole with emotion and gives to it subtle spell." The whole is enshrouded with an air of mystery. Fate hangs overhead, ready to pursue his relentless course. The dropping of the leaf from the shrine of the goddess is significant. The storm-tossed boat with its crew of pilgrims, the landing of Nabakumar to get fuel; his long delay and the consequent though the inevitable desertion of himself; the sacrificial priest, his neck bristling with human bones, seated on a corpse; his meeting with the heroine, a would-be victim of the *Kapalik*; the warning, the hasty marriage, the omen at the altar of the goddess; their escape, their settling down to a peaceful life; the distrust engendered in Nabakumar on his wife's fidelity, the appearance of Nemesis, the sacrificial priest, the pathetically tragic end; all these, woven, as they are, into a harmonious whole, yet, at the same time, each incident and character possessing

its individual merit, sufficiently indicate the happy faculty of the author in observation, creation and execution. Well has Mr. Frazer remarked that "Bankim Chandra, with all the insight of eastern poetic genius, with all the artistic delicacy of touch so easily attained by the subtle deftness a native of India or a Pierre Loti, weaves a fine-spun drama of life, fashioning his characters and painting their surroundings with the same gentle touch, as though his fingers worked amid the frail petals of some flower or moved along the lines of fine silk, to frame therewith a texture, as unsubstantial as the dreamy fancies with which all life is woven as warp and woof."

In 1872 he organized and brought forth that which is now considered to be the greatest Bengali periodical that has ever been published, the "Banga-Darsana." The security of his own position, the magical charm associated with his pen, combined to enhance its financial prospects and its literary status. Many of the great men of the day contributed to it

Bankim was now the literary king of Bengal and exercised the same sway over the literary world which Dr. Johnson possessed in the latter period of the eighteenth century. Mathusudan was no more. The waves of the Ganges had closed over the ashes of Dinobondhu. Vidyasagar had retired and lived in seclusion. Hem Chandra's lyre was unaccountably silent. There was no one to compete with him and, what is more, no one could compete with him. To the last he maintained his position with dignity, working with a sincere zeal for the cause of India and her literature.

It was in this journal that his "Bisha-briksha" appeared—a social novel presenting vividly the evils of self-interested reformers, the calanitous results of disregarding those time-honoured laws prescribed by the Hindu sages of yore and the banefulness of craving after western forms and ideals. We cannot help recollecting that pug-nosed school-master regarded with veneration by the villages for the profundity of his learning—learning which consisted in a knowledge of the first three books of Euclid and the perusal of the "Citizen of the World." Goldsmith's own schoolmaster is tame in comparison with this prodigy.

"Bisha-briksha" is a novel of great realistic merit. The incidents are those from life, natural, impressive and instructive. As to the characters, are they those lustreless inanities of the novel of the season, the plump and pinky dolls of coloured representations? Decidedly, not. They are the artistic and vigorous delineations of beings from ordinary life. They are drawn from life and the more we observe them, the more distinctly we see the novelist holding up the mirror to nature. It is a story of the conflict of the passions;

one all self-love, the desire for self-gratification, the other, which eventually wins, the love centred round the soul, the love of the God in man.

Bankim's patriotism was of a character which can only enhance the regard with which he is held. It was not an unity by itself, so to say. It blended with his love of God and helped to shape his character. It was for his "Lares and Penates and the Temple of Vesta" that he fought and not for self-aggrandisement. His opinions, although not perfectly orthodox, yet were not heretical. He saw not the shell but the kernel, not the body, but the soul. All useless matters he discarded and utilised the important factors. His books are a reflex of his own character and personality. As from page to page we read, we see him, as a zealous votary of his country's gods or the manifestations of God, a champion of the ancient Hindu Laws and the faith of his fathers.

Nations rise and flourish, swaying the rod of empire and then crumble into a stately ruin—a pastime for archaeologists. Such is also the fate of man. He rises and soon as his star is on the ascendant, he exercises his ephemeral sway. Then comes the inevitable fall—a fall causing him to be a source of vain regrets and trebly enhanced grief to his admirers and food for critics. It was the year 1894. For the time being, East and West, rich and poor, all were all tied by one bond, the bond of sorrow for a departed genius. Bengal had seen the last of her greatest son.

NEATES C. LEHARRY.

29. 11. 09.

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## The Late Dr. Debendra Nath Roy, L.M.S., Rai Bahadur

*Late Hon'y. Asst. Surgeon to H. E. the Viceroy and Governor-General  
of India.*

Dr. Devendra Nath Roy was born on the 22nd July, 1848, and died on the night of Sunday, the 28th November, 1909.

In placing the late Dr. Roy before the public through the print the imagination of his numerous admirers lost in admiration, staggers for a moment till they hit upon the method of reducing the history of his life into two periods—Roy as a doctor and a man.

By the death of Dr. Devendra Nath Roy the medical profession of Bengal has sustained an almost irreparable loss and the Calcutta public its best friend. Dr. Roy, a resident of Krishnagar, closely connected with the Nadia Roy family, passed his Entrance Examination from the Calcutta Hare School. He subsequently joined the Presidency College where the late Mr. Lal Mohan Ghosh and Mr. R. C. Dutt were his contemporaries. In his second year of college life

he made arrangements to proceed to England when his brother Rai Bahadur Babu Jadu Nath Roy prevented him. After such disappointment he felt an inclination the other way and hence joined the Calcutta Medical College, where after a successful career he came out as a full-fledged Asst. Surgeon at the early age of 22 years. He joined Government service on the 1st of May 1873 at the age of 23 which he held most loyally and creditably till his retirement in August 1903. During this period he held many appointments with heavy responsibilities incidental to them, most memorable of which being his volunteered services in the Madras Famine of 1877 for which he received the highest appreciation from Lord Lytton, his connection with the Campbell Medical School for 20 years where his untiring labours in the cause of suffering humanity, skill and tact in the management of most trying of human sufferings have been more than once recognised by the successive superintendents and his colleagues ; his fatherly affection and benevolent care and sympathy towards the students won the hearts of all those that came in contact with him directly or indirectly.

As a medical practitioner outside he was held in highest esteem by his co-professionists for his sincere and sympathetic advice. His personal dignity which he always maintained endeared him to the relieved among whom he made no distinction of caste, creed and colour. As medical attendant on the poor, Dr. Roy never hesitated to return the fee which they out of gratitude would venture to offer, but rather used to offer them help either in money or in kind. His fatherly advice to the junior members of the profession, guiding them in the paths of self-dignity and uprightness has ever been appreciated.

As a public man he displayed the most enviable attribute of self-respect and self-assertion in maintaining what he considered to be right. He was a tower of strength in upholding the good name of the profession he belonged to.

He served in many public capacities as a Fellow of the Calcutta University and a member of the Senate, Vice-President of the Calcutta Medical Club, Vice-President of the Medico-Legal Section of the Calcutta Medical Congress of 1895, an expert witness before the Hemp Drug Commission, and President of the Calcutta Medical School. He was author of several recognised medical text-books and officiated as Calcutta Police Surgeon on several occasions.

In recognition of his meritorious services in varied functions the benign Government was pleased to decorate him as Rai Bahadur and appointed him Honorary Asst.-Surgeon to H. E. the Viceroy.

He leaves behind a large family to mourn his loss consisting of a widow, 3 sons, daughters, sons-in-law and grandsons. His eldest son Babu Sati Nath Roy is a pleader in Judge's Court, Alipore, the second one Babu Mallinath Roy is a Sub-Dy. Collector, 24 Pergannas and the last one Babu Jadu Nath Roy is an assistant in the C. & I. Department.

## THE SENATE HOUSE.

*(An Essay after Elia)*

I would advise thee, reader, to repair to an optician at once, if thou hast never noticed the magnificent building on the west side of College Square. It is a miracle of rare device. Upheld by lofty pillars, there it stands, a triumph of architecture, with busts and portraits of defunct celebrities scattered about in profusion—more solemn than the ‘works of Mephian kings,’ more enchanting than the elaborate vision of Comberbatch. Sombre and almost desolate during the major portion of the year, it bursts into active life at the advent of spring, when a whole legion of young men, of all shapes and sizes, assembles within its walls to \*

“If thou would’st view fair *Senate* aright,  
Go, visit it by the *March daylight*.”

The sight will strike thee dumb, it will make thy ‘two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,’ not with horror, gentle reader, but with wonder and mute admiration. Long before the fateful hour, there can be seen a huge conglomeration of pygmies and giants, genial Falstaffs and lean Cassiuses—an anxious band, swarming like ‘bees in spring time,’ bustling and jostling, talking and tittering, laughing and lolling, while the whole building resounds with the hum of human voices and thrills, as it were, with the unspeakable hurlyburly raging *intra muros*. Some are sauntering like veritable Brutuses, calm without but troubled within, making attempts at laughter with no better success than the ‘allegories (to quote Mrs. Malaprop) on the banks of the Nile’. Others are working away at their books like so many fretful moths, appealing silently to ‘angels and ministers of grace’ every now and then; for ‘the Ides of March has come but not yet gone.’ Yonder stripling is being made more nervous by the parting instructions of a solicitous guardian. Here is the ‘rising poet’ who has passed his time on the dizzy heights of Parnassus, composing ditties, dirges, elegies, epigrams, songs and sonnets—mostly addressed to some mysterious *Thou*—now hastily turning the leaves of some synopsis—wonderful things, *multum in parvo*; there strolls the book-worm, taking last looks into the *memorabilia*. ‘Double, double, toil and trouble.’ For the Last Day (the *dies irae*) has come, the Trumpet of Doom shall sound at ten, and the great Judgment will be held—all is bustle and preparation.

Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty :

\* \* \* \* \* Hark! the summons to appear are heard clear and distinct  
above the hubbub; ‘the signal given, behold a wonder.’ What was confusion

becomes order, the restless mass of moving heads quiets down into parallel rows—‘a thousand demi-gods on golden seats’ sitting ‘as week as lambs amidst lambs.’ *Mirabilis visu.* Silence sits brooding over them—an *active* silence unlike the dead stillness that reigned ‘before the winds were made’—broken only by the sound of the rapid march of pens over expanses of snowy ground.

How reverend is the view of these hushed heads  
Looking—

With what a gusto does that chap fall to his work. Write, write, Messala, for ‘*Papers* are long and Time is fleeting.’ Yon youth is wondering as to how an hexagon can be inscribed in a given circle—circles are forsooth dancing before his eyes but with no hexagons in them. Look how that fine fellow in that corner checks his *furor scribendi* (*lapsus memoriae*, gentle reader) and appeals to the ceiling for inspiration—the very picture of Niobe ‘appealing to the bolts of heaven.’ But Urania does not descend and mark how he scratches his head in a fruitless attempt to bring out therefrom the required information. He mops his forehead, rubs his chin, drinks some water, but all in vain. *Fata obstant.* The paper in his hand flutters in unison with his heart—A ‘divine despair’ seizes him—his thoughts are ‘too deep for tears’—with him ‘to be or not to be, that is the question.’

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Time is up! They hear a voice cry ‘Write no more.’ They rise to depart, cast wistful glances on the works they have done, and ‘anon they move in perfect phalanx’ towards the doors. Some look as if they are coming out of Trophonius’s cave, while others beam with satisfaction at the remembrance of *good works* done. In thrilling voices, they compare notes and discuss future prospects, as they jostle to get out and at last their voices are drowned in the hubbub and noise of everyday life. *Pax vobiscum.*

When I was a stripling of ten or twelve, I used to look upon this building with an awful fascination. To my boyish imagination it seemed to be the dwelling place of ‘Gorgons and Hydras and Chimaeras dire’—‘guarded by power and by spell’—a *terra incognita* ‘from whose bourne no traveller returned’ but with

Humble cares and delicate fears,  
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears—

Mistake me not, gentle reader, nor think that I belong to the class of the maligners of this grand old institution. How can I be ungrateful to it, for has not shown me and thousands of others, the way to the joys that proceed from knowledge alone and have I not contracted the sweetest friendships while

following the path prescribed by it ? If faults there be, with all its faults, I love it still.

But, me thinks I hear the distant snorings of musical sleepers. 'Night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast' and it is time to think of setting up 'the barrier between day and day.' So, all hail, reader, hail to thee and a hearty good-night.

S. K. H.

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## WORLD-STRANGENESS.

Homeless moments from the skies of unborn Time,  
Flighty fancies dancing to an unheard chime,  
Voiceless notes that glide and glimmer and glance from far-off clime,  
How oft you've girt your ether-woven chain  
                Around my heart and brain !

Like faery-music bathed in mystery-laden light,  
Like half-seen flash of smile that makes a dead face bright,  
Like half-heard breeze-blown calls in lonely tramps by half-moon night,  
Ye come and, all at once, my heedless mind  
                With winged spells ye bind !

Strange and alien like some distant, quivering star,  
Ghost-like, mystic, weird, like things beyond the bar,  
Lies this world's when, borne on iris-wings, from dream-lit far,  
Ye swim thro' shoreless deeps and viewless skies,  
                And burst upon my eyes.

O mother Earth, whom I have loved so long, so well,  
Whence these unwonted dreams, whence this estranging spell ?  
What deep experience do these unbidden visions feed and swell ?

What secret whispers do they bring for me,  
                Unheard o'er land and sea ?

Couriers of the Nameless, I have felt your power :  
Fleeting past, ye left for me your mystic dower—  
Left a sleeping voice that woke and questioned, hour by hour :

'Art thou awake in life, so full and deep,  
                Or dost thou merely sleep ?'

But O thou dearest loving Mother, ancient Earth !  
Where all that's life and beauty takes its rise and birth,  
With all thy loves and losses, laughs and wailings, moans and mirth !  
The whispering spells can never change me  
                My heart's true love for thee !

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

**English Literature for Schools.** Cambridge University Press. 15. 4d. each.

Looking over the specimens we have got of this series, we find that the publishers have aimed at bringing out a very judicious and happy selection of English books which are likely to be of value and interest to young readers at school. The series will familiarise the student with a large range of English writers with whom perhaps he would have remained wholly unacquainted except merely in their names. Grounded on a series of this nature a schoolboy will have the best chances of developing into a successful student of English literature. The paper, printing and get-up of the series leave nothing to be desired.

**1. Hazlitt's Character of Shakespeare's Plays.** This edition of the book ought to be appreciated by every student of Shakespeare and every lover of Hazlitt. The introduction gives all that the student wants to know about the English critic. The notes are not too many and never wander from the point.

**2. Daniel Defoe's Memoirs of a Cavalier.** This military romance of Defoe is interesting as being the most successful of all Defoe's attempts at palming off forged history as real. This interesting realistic novel of the 18th century is well worth being placed at the hands of young readers. The introduction gives a brief sketch of the state of affairs in England and Europe at the time of which the *Memoirs* give an imaginary picture. The notes, which are mainly historical, are concise and clear.

**3. Captain John Smith's Travels, and the History of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles, Books I-III.**

These two books, written by an Elizabethan seaman in the early days of English travel and colonisation, are sure to prove very interesting reading to the English schoolboy. The spelling has been modernised, and some passages have been omitted or amended. This perhaps is the only handy edition of these two fascinating books of the Elizabethan captain.

**4. William Cobbet's Rural Rides.** The selection of these 'Rides'—perhaps the most characteristic book of William Cobbett—has been judiciously made: only what has seemed likely to be interesting to juvenile readers has been selected. Political controversies have been wholly excluded. The introduction gives a good, though brief, appreciation of the writings and the personality of the "plain-spoken Mr. Cobbett." Cobbett's style, like Swift's, being of the "plain" and lucid type, is an excellent model for young students. The annotations are brief and simple.

**5. Essays of Addison from the Spectator.** Selections comprise 57 papers contributed by Addison to the *Spectator*, and are given in chronological order. Steeb's paper on the *Spectator Club* is given in the appendix. They are never elaborate like the cumbrous annotations in most editions designed for Indian students which prove more often a clog than a real help to them. But this book has been prepared for English Schools and probably the Indian boy will find the note a little insufficient for him. The introduction comprising about 20 pages, gives much useful information. We do not know whether it is possible to make a suitable selection from all the papers of Addison in the *Spectator* to one's satisfaction. But then this book does not aim at giving all the best papers in the complete work. Artificial grouping of papers has not been attempted. "Only in this way is it possible in a selection to convey something of the desultory charm of the complete work."













